THE FAILURE OF ALLIED DIPLOMACY IN THE BALKANS

Analysis of Shortcomings of Foreign Ministers There, Many of Whom Have Served in United States

Why Only Ablest Men Should Have Been Entrusted With Missions to Sofia, Bucharest and Athens

By F. CUNLIFFE-OWEN.

SIR EDWARD MALET, in one of his extremely rare speeches, delivered at a farewell banquet on the occasion of his retirement from the British Ambassadorship at Berlin, which he had held for a number of years, likened diplomats to buttons. He declared that they served as a connecting link of that garment of peace with which the world should be clothed. Sometimes the buttons are perfect and fulfil all that is required of them. But occasionally they are so inadequate, such lamentable misfits, that they completely fail in their mission to keep the garment of tranquillity securely fastened, with the result that it slips and slips, and even gives way altogether, dropping into the mud of war, as has been the case during the last few days in the southeast of Europe.

Great Britain's "buttons" in that part of the world and those of her allies, France, Russia and Italy, have shown themselves to be of the unsatisfactory order. They have shown themselves incapable of carrying into effect the policies of Sir Edward Grey, of M. Delcasse and of M. Sassonof, and the action of Bulgaria in siding with Germany and of Rumania and Greece in refusing to cooperate with the Powers of the Quadruple Entente cannot be looked upon otherwise than in the light of a diplomatic defeat, which representatives of the Allies have sustained at Sofia, Bucharest and Athens.

There is a disposition nowadays to consider diplomacy in the light of a superfluous calling, and envoys as having no other use than to impart telegraphic and written communications from their own government to the one to which they happen to be accredited. It is argued that the days are past when the foreign relations of sovereign States lay in the hollow of the hands of virtually absolute monarchs or of master statesmen, such as Prince Bismarck, the great Prince Metternich, Count Cavour, Lord Palmerston and Billy Pitt. And it is claimed that international policies and questions connected therewith are now determined by Cabinets composed of numerous Ministers and by the legislative bodies which they represent.

But while this may be the case to a certain extent with some of the Western nations, such as, for instance, Great Britain, France, Italy and Spain, it is certainly not so in what are known as the Balkan kingdoms. In Bulgaria, Greece and Rumania the control of the foreign policies of the nation has been usurped by the monarch, who, foreign in race and in two instances in creed to the people subject to his rule, exercises it in the present instance in a sense diametrically opposed to the will and best interests of the people.

At Sofia, at Bucharest and at Athens it is the King with whom the decision rests, no matter what the views of his constitutional advisers, and in Greece we have been witnessing for nearly ten months past the spectacle of Constantine and his German Queen defying the authority of Venizelos, the most powerful statesman that his country has produced in modern times, this too in spite of his backing by an overwhelmingly large majority in the Boule, or single legislative chamber.

In such countries, therefore, where the foreign policies of the nation are so entirely dominated by the occupant of the throne, the field for the exercise of all the arts of diplomacy is very great. If the envoy is an adept in his profession he should be able to win the confidence of the sovereign to whom he is accredited, to keep track of all the hostile influences at work, to endeavor to counteract them, to remain abreast of every modification in the views, the prejudices and even of the tastes of the King and of the Queen, and by means of mingled tact and strength of character to render them amenable to persuasion.

It has long been apparent that in the event of any great international conflagration in Europe, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece and Serbia would play a very weighty role, and that the destinies of the great Powers embroiled in the conflict would be extensively affected by events at Bucharest, Sofia, Athens and Belgrade. It was indeed in Belgrade that the present war may be said to have had its origin, and since the commencement of the struggle the attitude of Greece, Bulgaria and Rumania toward the belligerents has become a matter of ever increasing importance. Today the fate of the entire struggle may be said to depend in a great measure upon King Constantine and upon the two Kings Ferdinand.

The action of the Bulgarian autocrat in throwing in his lot with the two Kaisers and with the Sultan in defiance of popular sentiment in his dominions has vastly increased the difficulties of the Powers of the Quadruple Entente, so much so indeed that it is said to have brought about the Cabinet crisis in Paris which has resulted in the retirement from office of Minister of Foreign Affairs Delcasse. If the Anglo-French attempt to force the passage of the Dardanelles and to secure possession of Constantinople has thus far proved a failure, it is because King Constantine refused to permit the despatch last spring of the army of 150,000 men, which had been promised by his Prime Minister, Venizelos, to cooperate on the peninsula of Gallipoli with the operations of the British and French fleets.

He persisted in this refusal when Venizelos, who last month was restored to power by the huge majority cast in his favor at the general election, again sought to fulfil his pledges. Had these been carried into effect there is no doubt but that Constantinople would have already been in the hands of the Allies, whereas it is now a question whether it will not become necessary to withdraw the French and English troops from the Dardanelles in order to assist King Peter in stemming the German, Austrian and Bulgarian invasion of Serbia.

Were King Ferdinand of Rumania to yield to the clamorous demands of his subjects and to join in the defence of Serbia, cooperating with the Russians under Grand Duke Nicholas and with the English and French in the Balkans, the drive now in progress of the two Kaisers through Serbia to Constantinople and thence to Bagdad, and particularly to the Suez Canal and Egypt, where her cotton crop is awaiting them, would undoubtedly be frustrated. But with Rumania remaining neutral the difficulties of the situation for the Powers of the Quadruple Entente are vastly increased. Indeed it is no exaggeration to assert that the most vulnerable point of Great Britain and of her allies is to be found not in France or in Belgium but right in the southeast of Europe; that is to say, in the so-called Balkan States, and it is to that point, therefore, that all eyes in London, in Paris, in Petrograd and at Rome are turned at the present moment with a considerable amount of anxiety.

Under the circumstances it would seem that diplomats of the very first class and of remarkable ability should have been selected to represent the great Powers at Bucharest, Sofia, Athens and in Serbia in an endeavor to establish a predominant influence upon the sovereigns of these four kingdoms. The two Kaisers seem to have realized this. Thus, Austria did not hesitate to recall Prince Fuerstenberg, who had proved a dismal failure from a diplomatic point of view at Bucharest, and to appoint in his place Count Ottokar von Czernin, a statesman of the highest standing, who in his younger days had been connected with the diplomatic service and who is known to have accepted the mission wholly from motives of patriotism and solely because of the conviction that events of the utmost gravity to the Dual Empire were imminent at Bucharest.

Germany followed suit by withdrawing Herr von Waldthausen and transferring to Bucharest in his stead Baron von dem Bussche-Haddenhausen, who will be remembered at Washington, where he spent a number of years, as the most popular, tactful and altogether successful of German diplomats ever accredited to the United States. He was summoned for the purpose from Buenos Ayres by Emperor William, who had acquired the conviction that a man of altogether superior ability was needed in order to assist the Hohenzollern rulers of Rumania in their strenuous efforts to remain friendly to Germany in the face of the opposition of the bulk of the Rumanian people.

Not content with this the Kaiser has sent a succession of special emissaries to Bucharest, some of them of royal rank, such as, for instance, the Duke John Albert of Meckienburg-Schwerin, first of all Regent of the Grandduchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and afterward for a number of years at the head of the Regency of Brunswick, and Prince Ernest of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, now representing the Teuton Empire at Stamboul, and who, being married to the favorite sister of Queen Marie of Rumania, was therefore in a position to exercise much influence upon his brother-in-law, King Ferdinand.

It cannot be denied that the Austrian and German envoys, namely, Count Ottokar von Czernin and Baron von dem Bussche-Haddenhausen, were men of an entirely different stamp, and in a diplomatic sense immeasurably superior to the envoys of Russia, of France and of Great Britain. The Muscovite Plenipotentiary, Poklowski-Koeziel, it is true, is a very charming, agreeable and particularly hospitable man, of great wealth. He was for a long time attached to the Russian Embassy in London, where he became a particular favorite of King Edward and a member of the latter's intimate entourage. Another of his great friends in London was Consuelo Duchess of Manchester, nee Yznaga, and he was a familiar figure among the Anglo-American set in the British metropolis.

He is a gay and jovial bachelor of Polish origin. His grandfather was a Polish revolutionist, who in 1848 was banished to Siberia, where he managed to become the greatest brandy and vodka distiller of Russia in Asia, amassing a colossal fortune. Indeed, it used to be said that he had revenged himself on Russia for his exile by accustoming the people of Siberia to drunkenness.

Passionately devoted to bridge, which is his one interest in life, and wholly indifferent to his losses at the card table, the Czar's envoy at Bucharest cannot be said to shine in any way in a diplomatic sense. He proved a great failure at Teheran, so much so that his transfer to a European post became a matter of necessity. But instead of his being moved to Lisbon, to Madrid or to some capital where his lack of statecraft could have done no harm and where his social gifts would have been appreciated to their utmost extent, he was, of all places in the world, nominated to Bucharest.

Poklewski was followed there from Teheran by Sir George Barclay (in no way related to Colville Barclay, the popular councillor of the British Embassy at Washington), who had been just as unsuccessful as his Russian friend and colleague in Persia. The two men used to play bridge together every day at Teheran, have continued to do so at Bucharest and are pretty much of the same stamp; that is to say, amiable, but not brilliant.

Sir George, who was at one time attached to the British Embassy at Washington, has an American wife, in the person of the former Miss Beatrice Mary Jay Chapman, daughter of the late Henry G. Chapman of New York, and it used to be reported at Teheran that much of the failure of Morgan Shuster as American Treasurer-General of the Shah's Government was due to the fact that he, through some ignorance of diplomatic usage or social convention, managed at the very outset of his stay there to excite the resentment and the prejudice of his countrywoman, the chatelaine of the British Legation.

Neither Sir George nor Lady Barclay has succeeded in their three years stay at Bucharest in attaining the slightest degree of influence over the present King and Queen, although the latter is a Princess of the reigning house of Great Britain and Ireland, brought up entirely in England as an English girl. In this the Barclays differ from their predecessors at the British Legation at Bucharest. For both Sir Walter and Lady Susan Townley, who will be remembered at Washington, were warm friends of the then Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Rumania, the intimacy between the brilliant Lady Susan and the beautiful and gifted consort of the present King having been of a most intimate character. But then it was just because the Towneleys had been so successful at Bucharest, where they enjoyed a most advantageous position, that they were suddenly transferred to Teheran to repair the mistakes there of the Barclays.

As for the French Minister Plenipotentiary at Bucharest, he is a man of the name of Camille Blonde, who has been stationed there for nearly ten years, after having spent some time in Mexico as envoy. He is over 60 years of age, in no sense of the word interesting, neither to Queen Marie nor to the people of her gay court, nor yet to the pleasure loving society of Rumania, while the range of his diplomatic abilities may be gauged by the fact that some eighteen months ago he, with the object of winning friends for France, imported Andre de Fouquieres, the Paris cotillon leader, who so distinguished himself in New York as the judge of a fox trotting competition at Madison Square Garden, to deliver a series of addresses upon Gallic mode and fashionable life.

At Sofia the Powers of the Quadruple Entente have been still more indifferently served from a diplomatic point of view, and when only a few weeks ago Sir Henry Bax-Ironside was recalled and replaced with Hugh James O'Beirne, one of the cleverest and most agreeable of the Irish born members of the British diplomatic service, the mischief had already been done beyond repair, and it was too late to deter King Ferdinand of Bulgaria from the pro-German course to which he had committed his unfortunate Government. Bax-Ironside, who was stationed at Washington from 1894 to 1897, proved a lamentable failure at Sofia in connection with Sir Edward Grey's policy, with which he was entrusted since the beginning of the war, and even prior thereto, namely, the winning over of King Ferdinand to the cause of the Anglo-Franco-Russian coalition.

The fact of the matter is that Bax-Ironside was so long the confidential secretary and alter ego of the late Sir William White when the latter was Ambassador at Stamboul that he imbibed there much of Sir William's marked predilection for the Turks and hatred for Russia and for Pan-Slav methods. He therefore found it difficult to give his heart to the task of inducing Bulgaria to make common cause with Russia, and incidentally with the latter's allies against that Ottoman Empire, which has always been in Russia her principal foe. Moreover, Bax-Ironside, while a very learned man and credited with the mastery of the Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Chinese (Mandarin) languages, as well as modern Greek and Sanskrit, and having even a Finnish dictionary to his record, is not a man of the world, is devoid of social graces, is quite the reverse of genial in his manner, lacks wit, repartee and all sense of humor and makes friends with difficulty.

Naturally Sir Henry was unsuccessful in his attempts to exercise any sort of influence upon a ruler so astute, so slippery and so utterly unscrupulous in his Machiavellism as Ferdinand, who has justly been surnamed the Mephistopheles of the Balkans. Ferdinand's reputation for intrigue and for mischief is so widespread throughout the Old World that whenever he used to start forth from Sofia on his numerous foreign travels a warning would be sent to the Governments and diplomatic chancelleries of every capital in Europe to the effect that "Der Teufel is wieder los" (the devil is loose again). With a man of his class a savant like Bax-Ironside, who had been brought into the diplomatic service by Lord Rosebery on account of his successes at Oxford, had no chance.

Equally inefficient was the Russian envoy, Councillor of State Savinsky, who came to Sofia with a record of having very seriously compromised the interests of his country at Stockholm. It is of the utmost importance for Russia to be on good terms with Sweden owing to the virtual command enjoyed by the latter of the entrance to the Baltic. Yet Savinsky conducted the affairs of his legation at Stockholm in such fashion as to expose it to bitter charges of espionage which through the indiscretion of his mission were even extended to the beautiful Russian wife of Prince William of Sweden, namely the Grand Duchess Marie Paulovitch. So unpleasant did the situation become at Stockholm that the Grand Duchess, finding life there intolerable, left both Sweden and her husband, securing a dissolution of her marriage, while Savinsky and his military attache were withdrawn by Russia on the demand of the Swedish court and Government as no longer persona grata.

From the Allies' point of view it is to be deplored that the Petrograd Government did not see its way at the beginning of the war to despatch to Sofia as special envoy her Ambassador at Washington, George Bakhmeteff. The latter spent many years as Muscovite plenipotentiary in Bulgaria, has a profound experience of her affairs and of her public men of every class, and above all used to exercise so wonderful an influence upon King Ferdinand that his colleagues were wont to ascribe it, half jokingly, half seriously, to hypnotic power. In view of the importance of securing Bulgaria's cooperation in the present war it would certainly have been worth while for Russia to have sent George Bakhmeteff from his embassy on the banks of the Potomac to take charge once more of King Ferdinand at Sofia.

Germany and Austria, on the other hand, have had capable envoys in Bulgaria. The Kaiser's representative is Privy Councillor Michahelles, who in spite of his bourgeois origin has by sheer cleverness raised himself from a subordinate post in the German Consulate at Alexandria to the front rank of the Kaiser's diplomatic service, of which he is looked upon as one of the ablest members. Austria has as her representative at Sofia Count Adam Tarnowski, at one time attached to the Austrian Embassy at Washington, and who subsequently became a great favorite in London, where both he and his brilliant wife, a Princess Marie Swiatopolk-Czetwertynska, became bright particular stars of the late King's set. Edward VII., who was no mean judge of character, entertained a very high opinion of the cleverness of Count Adam Tarnowski and especially of the powers of fascination of the Countess and of the influence which she succeeded in exercising upon the men of her acquaintance.

Of course, Dr. Michahelles and the Tarnowskis have derived a great deal of assistance at Sofia from the numerous German and Austrian members of the household of Ferdinand, in particular from Col. Dobner von Dettendorf, formerly of the Austrian army, who has been with the King ever since he ascended the throne as personal aide-de-camp; Ritter von Fleischmann, another Viennese, principal private secretary of the monarch, and until quite recently the latter's German physician, Dr. Graetzer. For Ferdinand was born in Austria, where he made his home until his election to the throne of Bulgaria, and is above everything else an essentially German prince of the house of Coburg. Moreover, all his very large property is located in the dual empire and in Germany, where it would have been confiscated if he had sided with the Powers of the Triple Entente.

At Athens France has been represented by a Socialist of the name of Gabriel Deville, most fervent disciple of Karl Marx, and who complained that Jules Guesde's doctrines were not sufficiently advanced. He made so little headway during the six years that he was accredited to the court of Greece that within the last two months he has been superseded by Jean Guillemin, who has an American wife in the person of the former Miss Isabel Hart of New York. But the appointment of Guillemin, brother of the widowed Marquise de Montebello, formerly French Ambassadress at Petrograd, has come, I fear, too late and he will find it very difficult to repair the shortcomings of his incompetent predecessor and to turn King Constantine from his pro-German sympathies.

Of course the envoys of the Quadruple Entente at Athens are terribly handicapped in their task by the great influence which Queen Sophia, the most clever and masterful of all the sisters of the Kaiser, exercises over her husband, whom she completely dominates. She is devoted to her brother, Emperor William, and to the German cause and has proclaimed aloud her resolve to leave Greece forever if the Hellenic Government takes sides against the land of her birth.

She is assisted in her efforts in behalf of Germany by the Kaiser's envoy, Count von Quadt, for several years attached to the German Embassy at Washington, and particularly by a Baron von Schenck, formerly a member of the German diplomatic service, but now representative at Athens of the German Wolff News Agency and incidentally chief of the entire pro-German propaganda in Greece, disposing of large sums of secret service money. The Austrian envoy at Athens can hardly be called a shining light. But then it is difficult to say much more than that of the Russian plenipotentiary, the multi-millionaire Prince Elim Demidoff of San Donato, who is a far greater expert in matters of sport than in those of diplomacy and more interested in amusement than in statecraft.

As for the English Minister, he is Sir Francis Elliot, who having spent some twelve years at Athens is the dean of the diplomatic corps there and who in view of his age—he is over 64—and of his opportunities as a son of the late Sir Henry Elliot should have long ago attained the rank of Ambassador. A charming, amiable man, who in his young days rowed for Eton and for Balliol and was a famous athlete, the very fact that he should still be at Athens as mere Minister Plenipotentiary may serve in a measure to explain his failure to influence King Constantine toward the cause of the Allies.

Princess Demidoff, wife of Russian Minister to Athens.

Count von Quadt, Germany's Envoy at Athens.

Countess von Quadt.

M. Poklowski-Koeziell, Russian Envoy at Bucharest.

Sir Henry and Lady Bax-Ironside.

He was superseded a few weeks ago at Sofia as having failed to accomplish his mission.

In centre—George Bakhmeteff, Russian Ambassador to the United States.

WARTIME SCENES IN SERBIA ALONG THE ROAD FROM NISH TO BELGRADE

Life in Former Capital Running Smoothly When Visited During a Lull in the Fighting

By ELON JESSUP,
Of the Columbia University Relief Expedition.

THE train had left Nish at 8 o'clock the night before. Now it was 8 o'clock in the morning and we were still two hours from Belgrade. In times of peace a rather easy going train covers the distance in five hours, but now everything is forced to make way for the military.

It was a remarkably rich and beautiful country that we were passing through. Its low rolling hills and fertile fields reminded one of certain parts of New York State. It had an air of thrift and industry rather lacking in the country south of Nish. For this was the old Serbia, from which the Turk had long since departed and where the Bulgar was not an ever present peril, with the result that the thrifty peasant had had some opportunity to think of other things than war. That only a few months before the Austrian army had marched by this very route, leaving havoc and destruction in its wake, seemed incredible.

A strapping English Red Cross man entered our compartment, offering cigarettes and extending good fellowship. Cigarettes are at a decided premium in Serbia and the fortunate mortal in possession of one treasures it as he would the last match in a duck hunt. From the Englishman we learned many things of Serbia, and particularly of Belgrade. The train did not run into the city, we were informed, but made its destination about five miles short of it, the reason for the present terminus being fear of Austrian fire. The former route along the river was directly within the range of Austrian guns.

"However," he continued, "don't be disappointed. You may see some fun. Two days ago an Austrian aeroplane dropped several bombs around the station where we get off."

Upon arrival at the station the journey could be continued by carriage or walking. Officers took the carriages; privates and peasants went afoot and we followed in their wake. Along an avenue of rare beauty, over a wooden bridge, we went—iron scrap heaps by the road were reminders of the Austrian invasion of last year. Our leaders now struck off from the main road and took to a side path up a high hill. We obediently followed amid puffing and blowing and a not altogether certain attitude as to direction.

Suddenly we reached the top of the hill and there stretched out before us lay one of the rarest panoramas I have ever seen—Belgrade, long known as the Paris of the Balkans, shone in the sun as an enchanted city. There was no noise, no smoke, no life discernible from that distance—it seemed as something apart from the rest of the world. And there flowed the sinuous Danube and the sluggish Save; small islands and miles of lowlands stretched off to the horizon, and directly across from Belgrade loomed up the Austrian city of Semlin.

Although we were not near enough either city to distinguish any work of destruction, the thoroughly unprotected condition of each was particularly noticeable from our vantage point. We walked on, and hidden in the trees about a hundred yards from the top of the hill came upon the first real work of war—a deserted home, evidently hit by an aeroplane bomb, for the entire roof and front had been blown away. Inside were the remnants of enough furniture to go far toward furnishing a home—tables, beds, chairs and a baby's cradle. On a wall hung a large picture, with the frame intact but the canvas slashed in many places—another relic of the Austrian invasion, evidently.

Belgrade was still three miles away and we continued our journey down the hill. We saw our destination straight ahead at the edge of the city—the American Hospital. High on a hill it stood, the Stars and Stripes fluttering in the breeze. Upon our arrival we were accorded the usual warm greetings given by Americans to Americans in a strange land.

The American Hospital is justly known as the "model of the Balkans." Something over a year ago Dr. Edward Ryan, with the aid of an American staff, employing American methods and organization, developed what had been a hospital of decidedly questionable cleanliness and order into one that would do credit to New York city. When originally built the hospital had been considered the project of an insane man. But last year when typhus appeared and the Americans took charge few such opinions remained.

The hospital comprises nine buildings, in which there were housed about 500 patients at the time of our visit. The organization and conditions of cleanliness were perfect and an attractive parking system gave the grounds an especially cheerful aspect. Many wounded Austrian prisoners and Serbian soldiers were hobbling about, seemingly quite content with their fate.

From the American doctors we learned much of the hostilities in Belgrade. The hospital itself had suffered to a small extent, for it happens that the grounds are in a direct line between the French aviation field and the Austrian shore. In the course of several air battles stray shots had not infrequently fallen into the grounds. Only a few days before a sensational fight had taken place in the air in the course of which the Austrian aviator had been killed and his machine sent to the river bed.

No systematic bombardment of the city had been going on since last spring, when the arrival of the English, French and Russian batteries had put a stop to the continuous work of destruction that had been in progress for many months. The Austrian and English batteries exchanged shots almost daily and visits by Austrian aeroplanes were not infrequent, but, we were told, nothing of importance was happening.

"There's nothing doing," said one of the doctors. "People are returning to their homes and the city is beginning to look the way it did before the war."

We were directed to the centre of the city. We walked along deserted streets—residential streets of former beauty grown high in grass and weeds. A trolley system of no small proportions showed few remains of its former usefulness—rusted tracks and an occasional dangling wire were all that remained.

What had formerly been lampposts of no little artistic value were in many cases shattered beyond recognition. We passed one of the many parks for which Belgrade had been noted; a bramble of high grass and weeds, portions of large trees shattered by shrapnel had completely choked all former beauty. Nearly all private homes had suffered to varying degrees, some by total destruction, others merely by marred walls as the result of shells bursting in the street.

Now we came into full view of the waterfront, the portion of the city that had been an easy mark for Austrian monitors before the arrival of the foreign batteries. The eye followed a half circle of complete devastation extending from the remains of the great iron bridge across the Save, destroyed in the early stages of the war, on around the city's waterfront and off down the Danube as far as one could see. And not a man or creature was moving.

But now we were emerging from the residential districts and coming into the main business thoroughfare. The change was as great as that between darkness and light. The street was well filled with people; stores were open; peasants heavily laden with fresh vegetables were arriving from the country; cafes were crowded.

To be sure, destruction was ever present, but it seemed to have little deadening effect upon the spirit of these people; they had become accustomed to the terrors of war. Later in the day I saw an example of this stoical attitude.

I was buying some small trinket in a store. Suddenly the boom of a big gun broke the stillness and caused me to run to the door. Continued booming went far from relieving the tension. Although it proved to be the Austrian and English batteries engaging each other, it might just as well have been a bombardment of the city by an enemy airman or batteries.

I looked back at the proprietor of the store. He was busily engaged in tying up my package, and his face had broadened into an amused smile at my alarm. It meant nothing to him—it was a daily happening.

In the evening we hunted up a sidewalk cafe and had dinner. The tables were crowded with French, Serbian, English and Russian officers. Lights glared to the sky, but none seemed to give thought to the possibility of a hostile airman putting in an appearance. And such had happened again and again.

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Unloading a British naval gun in Serbia.

Even before the Balkan situation became acute England began sending aid to her Serbian allies.

STEEPLEJACKS OUTRISKED.

STEEPLEJACKS have long enjoyed a reputation for daring, but it is a question whether they come in the same class of riskers as the awning removers, who recently began their annual task of taking down the "sun shades" from the front of houses all over the city. These removers do not need or use the rope and block and fall accessories of the steeple men. Yet they climb to places and do their work in what seems to be an impossible manner.

Starting at the street level two or three awning removers will strip the entire front of a flat house and never go indoors. They are as agile as acrobats. They reach up to a window sill and then raise themselves to the window ledge. Finishing the window while standing at this ledge they seize the top stone of the window, pull themselves up to it and from there reach again to the window ledge above so as to strip another window. Through the belt they wear runs a line and with this they lower the awnings as they take them down.

How they can do their work with so little to hang on to is more remarkable than the tasks performed by the structural iron workers. The iron worker if he slips has something at hand in the way of a beam around which he has a chance to lock his arms. The awning remover when he slips falls outward from the ledge and has nothing to clutch. Recently three awning removers stripped a seven story flat of seventy-five windows in The Bronx in the remarkable time of three hours, all from the outside.